

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00
OMB-01 IGA-02 ARA-06 ACDA-07 /107 W
-----250853Z 105309 /15

R 231019Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3117
INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY COTONOU
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ABIDJAN 4091

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR CG AO IV US
SUBJ: IVORIAN VIEWS ON US ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE

REF: STATE 82515 AND ABIDJAN 3987

1. IN VIEW OF PROTRACTED ABSENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTER
USHER, LAST WEEK IN LIBERIA FOR HOUPHOUET'S OFFICIAL
VISIT AND THIS WEEK IN DAKAR FOR FRANCO-AFRICAN SUMMIT,
I MADE AN APPOINTMENT YESTERDAY WITH FOREIGN MINISTER'S
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DIRECTOR OF CABINET, EMMANUEL NOUAMA, TO TAKE A READING
ON IVORIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN
ZAIRE AND TO BRING NOUAMA UP TO DATE ON US ASSISTANCE
TO ZAIRE. WHILE IVORIAN OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN RESTRAINED
IN THEIR PUBLIC COMMENTS, GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER FRATERNITE
MATIN HAS BEEN GIVING FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE TO DEVELOPMENTS
IN ZAIRE, TOGETHER WITH EDITORIAL COMMENT CONGRATULATING

FRENCH AND MOROCCANS AND CHIDING UNITED STATES FOR NOT BEING PROMPTER AND MORE FORTHCOMING IN COMING TO MOBUTU'S ASSISTANCE. (ABIDJAN 3987)

2. AFTER I HAD ADVISED NOUAMA OF THE ACTIONS WE ARE TAKING TO PROVIDE ZAIRE WITH ADDITIONAL NON-LETHAL MILITARY AID, NOUAMA SAID THAT WHILE THESE ACTIONS WERE HELPFUL HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY USG APPEARED SO RELUCTANT TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST SOVIET/CUBAN MEDDLING IN SHABA PROVINCE. WHETHER CUBAN OR SOVIET ADVIERS WERE PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN ZAIRE WITH KATANGAN FORCES SEEMED TO NOUAMA BESIDE THE POINT. THE KATANGANS COULD NOT POSSIBLY HAVE MOVED INTO ZAIRE WITHOUT THE ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS. FURTHERMORE, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTEND THAT THE TROUBLES IN SHABA WERE AN "INTERNAL" AFFAIR OF ZAIRE WHEN, AS THE SENEGALESE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD SAID RECENTLY, THE KATANGANS HAD VIOLATED THE BORDERS OF ZAIRE WITH AT LEAST THE "BENEDICTION" OF THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT.

3. I SAID THAT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD TAKEN--AND WAS CONTINUING TO TAKE--EFFECTIVE ACTION TO ASSIST THE ZAIRE GOVERNMENT TO DEFEND ITS TERRITORY. THE DEBATE GOING ON IN THE UNITED STATES ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE KATANGAN INCURSION INTO SHABA WAS A REFLECTION OF THE DIFFERING OPINIONS VOICED BY THE AFRICAN STATES THEMSELVES. THIS DEBATE SHOULD NOT, IN MY OPINION, BE PERMITTED TO OVERSHADOW THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS EXTENDING ASSISTANCE
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TO THE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT AND DID NOT IN ANY WAY CONDONE VIOLATION OF ZAIRE'S FRONTIER.

4. NOUAMA SAID THAT NEVERTHELESS THE CONFLICTING STATEMENTS OF US OFFICIALS ABOUT EVENTS IN ZAIRE WERE CREATING AN IMPRESSION OF INDECISION AND CONFUSION IN AMERICAN POLICY. THE IVORIAN GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THAT THE SOVIETS AND THEIR CUBAN SURROGATES WOULD CONTINUE TO WHITTLE AWAY AT THE STABILITY AND RESOLVE OF MODERATE AFRICAN STATES AS LONG AS THEY BELIEVED THEY COULD DO SO WITH IMPUNITY. THE IVORIANS APPLAUDED THE INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE FRENCH AND MOROCCANS BUT BELIEVED THAT ONLY THE UNITED STATES HAD THE STRENGTH ULTIMATELY TO COUNTER-BALANCE SOVIET/CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ABIDJAN 4091

5. I TOLD NOUAMA THAT THE DEBATE AMONG AMERICAN POLICY
MAKERS TO WHICH HE OBJECTED AND WHOSE EFFECT HE FEARED
HAD POSITIVE AS WELL AS NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS. I RECALLED
THAT IN MY INITIAL MEETING WITH HOUPHOUET LAST NOVEMBER
THE PRESIDENT HAD OUTLINED IN SOME DETAIL HIS VIEWS ON
THE SITUATION IN AFRICA. AT THAT TIME HOUPHOUET HAD
PLACED HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC
PROBLEMS AND THE NEED FOR THE UNITED STATES AND ITS
EUROPEAN ALLIES TO ASSIST THE DEVELOPING STATES OF AFRICA
TO ESCAPE FROM THE THIRD-WORLD POVERTY TRAP. ONLY IN
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THIS WAY, HOUPHOUET HAD SAID, COULD A REALLY DURABLE
BARRIER BE ERRECTED IN AFRICA AGAINST SOVIET PENETRATION.
AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND,I THOUGHT THAT THE VARIOUS
OPINIONS BEING PUBLICLY EXPRESSED BY US OFFICIALS,

WHETHER IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OR ON CAPITAL HILL, SHOWED AN AWARENESS THAT AFRICAN PROBLEMS HAD BOTH ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS. WHAT MIGHT APPEAR TO BE CONTRADICTORY CURRENTS IN AMERICAN POLICY WOULD EVENTUALLY, I THOUGHT, TURN OUT TO BE CONFLUENT CURRENTS. WHAT WAS ENCOURAGING TO ME WAS THAT NONE OF THE AMERICAN VOICES TO WHICH NOUAMA REFERRED WAS EXPRESSING INDIFFERENCE TO AFRICAN PROBLEMS. ON THE CONTRARY THESE VOICES WERE CALLING FOR GREATER AND MORE SUSTAINED ASSISTANCE TO AFRICAN STATES. I WAS CONFIDENT THAT THIS HIGH LEVEL OF INTEREST IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS WOULD RESULT IN A US POLICY TOWARD AFRICA WHICH GAVE DUE WEIGHT TO BOTH ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FACTORS.

6. NOUAMA SAID THAT HE FOUND THIS ANALYSIS INTERESTING ALTHOUGH HE STILL BELIEVED THAT THE UNITED STATES COULD NOT AFFORD TO AGONIZE TOO LONG OR TOO PUBLICLY ABOUT ITS PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES IN AFRICA. HE SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT HE AND OTHER SENIOR IVORIAN OFFICIALS WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY DURING THE COM CONFERENCE IN MAY TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS DIRECTLY WITH AMERICAN POLICY MAKERS.

7. COMMENT: IN THE COURSE OF MY CONVERSATION WITH NOUAMA I TOLD HIM THAT THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR HAD RECENTLY EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN TO ME THAT MOROCCO, FRANCE, EGYPT AND THE SUDAN WERE IN A SOMEWHAT EXPOSED POSITION SINCE THE MORAL AND/OR MATERIAL SUPPORT THEY WERE GIVING TO ZAIRE WAS NOT BEING PARALLELED BY SIMILAR ACTION ON THE PART OF THE BLACK AFRICANS. I ASKED NOUAMA WHETHER THEY IVORY COAST WAS CONSIDERING ACTION ALONG THESE LINES. NOUAMA REPLIED THAT MOBUTU HAD REQUESTED ASSISTANCE
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AND THAT THE IVORIAN AMBASSADOR IN KINSHASA HAD STRONGLY RECOMMENDED A TOKEN SHIPMENT OF FOODSTUFFS TO ZAIRE. NOUAMA BELIEVED THAT SOME WUCH ACTION BY THE IVORIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE APPROVED BY HOUPHOUET IN NEAR FUTURE. STEARNS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ABIDJA04091
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770143-0294
Format: TEL
From: ABIDJAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770427/aaaaawiv.tel
Line Count: 213
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d7f216a0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 82515, 77 ABIDJAN 3987
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2715298
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IVORIAN VIEWS ON US ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, CG, AO, IV, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d7f216a0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009